Remarks/Arguments

This application has been further considered in light of the Non-Final Office Action mailed June 9, 2008. As a result, further amendments have been made to claims 1 and 28 in order to further improve on the definition of the claimed invention and so as to further distinguish the claims over the prior art reference to Giarding. No new matter is being added.

Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 12-14, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 24-28 have been rejected as being directly anticipated by US Patent 1,082,317 to Giarding. Reconsideration of this rejection is requested in view of the reasons set forth herein.

The Examiner has indicated that the subject matter of claims 3-6, 9, 10, 15-17, 20 and 23 is directed to allowable subject matter and these claims would be allowed if amended or rewritten to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Examiner noted that the previous amendment of claims 1 and 28 to include the alternative language "or a member secured to and extending from the projection" made the claims optional and thus the prior amendments did not overcome the rejection mailed 01/24/2008. In this respect, claims 1 and 28 have been

amended to delete the alternative language and to further distinguish the claims over the structure of Giarding. The claims have been amended to recite that *the projection is formed with the vertical strut and extends laterally therefrom so as to be oriented in alignment with an adjacent one of the cross-bars toward the other of the spaced struts*. There is no such structure in Giarding. The component "j" of Giarding is not formed with the vertical strut and does not extend laterally in alignment with the adjacent one of the cross-bars toward the other of the vertical struts.

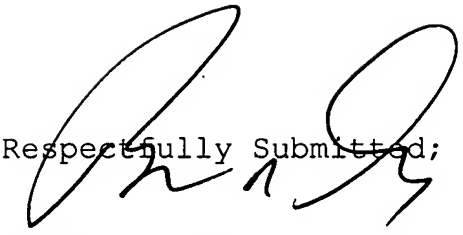
In addition to the foregoing, with the present invention, when the tubular part of the end portions of the cross-bar is being secured to the protection, the at least one locking member exerts forces radially outwardly such as shown at (F_3, F'_3). The purpose of the invention is to provide the at least one hoop to completely surround and engage the out walls of the tubular part to counteract the forces (F_3, F'_3). The locking member "g" in Giarding does not exert outwardly directing forces that would place stress on the walls of the tubular end part of the cross members "a" and "b" that would require a reinforcing hoop to be placed completely about the tubular end part. It should be noted that in Giarding, the vertical struts are formed as flat metal strips "C" having folded ends "C^2" that are bolted at "f" to

extensions "g^2" of the blocks "g". Thus, in Giarding, the ends of the ends of the vertical struts are folded over the ends of the cross-bars and there is no separate hoop for reinforcing the cross-bars as taught and claimed in the present application.

It is further respectfully submitted that the use of the screws "j" to attach the folded ends of the vertical struts "C" in Giarding would not place stress on the folded ends, especially as the ends are secured by the bolts "f". If any force is generated by the screw "j" to compress the end part of the cross-rods, such force would tend to compress the open slots in the cross-rods which would prevent the functioning of the heald members or wires "d", which in certainly not the case.

In view of the foregoing, the present invention is clearly distinguishable over the reference, not only in structure, but also as to functionality. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and allowance of the claims solicited. In the event the Examiner has any questions regarding the allowability of the claims, an interview with the Examiner is requested before any action is taken that may be considered as final.

Respectfully Submitted;



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